

Agency Transition Form
Frequently Asked Questions
Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services

1. How do the state education agency and local education agencies work with transitioning of students?

The Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) has general supervisory responsibility over all public schools in the state. The local education agencies are responsible for addressing the transition requirements of the IDEA in the development and implementation of a student's IEP. By the age of 14, or younger if appropriate, schools work with students and parents in identifying the postschool outcomes of the student based upon individual needs, preferences, and interests. They also include in the IEP the courses of study and educational experience the student will be involved in over a multiple-year time frame. There should be an alignment with what the student wants to do beyond school to what courses are provided. The student then is prepared for post-school activities, as well as sees the educational relevancy with what they are taking in school to what their postschool visions are.

By the age of 16, schools work with students and parents to develop a coordinated set of activities. These activities are designed to promote movement from school to post-school outcomes. Coordination indicates that multiple players will be involved, with the student, family members, other state agencies, and other individuals who have special knowledge or expertise regarding the student.

2. How are the state education agency and the local education agencies resources to students with disabilities?

The ADE/ESS provides technical assistance and training to schools, parents, and the community at large on various issues surrounding services for students with disabilities. Every school in the state is assigned to an Exceptional Student Services (ESS) specialist. In addition, we have seven Parent Information Network Specialists (PINS) who assist parents with understanding the issues surrounding special education in the schools and who offer training to schools, parent groups, and the community at large.

Local education agencies provide a learning environment for students in all areas of life. We must remember that transition extends beyond school to work. Schools should be preparing students not only for the workplace, but also to be involved within the community, to feel comfortable and confident with independent living skills, and to know where to seek postsecondary education. Schools help students and family members know what exists in the community and where services and supports can be obtained once schooling ends.

3. What types of services or supports does the state education agency and local education agencies offer to students and families who are transitioning?

Ongoing trainings and workshops exist for families through our department, especially with our PINS. We are beginning to develop workshops and trainings for students as well. Information is available on our website, which can be reached at www.ade.az.gov. InterAct Arizona, the state system's change grant for transition services, also has a website which is accessible from the ADE/ESS web page. The Enhancing Arizona Parents Network (EAPN) was formed with over 25 of the agencies supporting students and families throughout Arizona. Conferences are posted on the EAPN website and updated regularly. The quarterly *Special Edition* has timely, relevant information for parents on the latest research and events in Arizona and nationwide surrounding special education issues.

4. What is the most important issue you would like to tell:

- a. Parents – Have high expectations for your child-expect that he/she will live independently, attend college, and participate in life's enjoyments. Empower your children as opposed to enabling them. Allow them to explore the world. Involve yourself and your children in activities that are in the IEP. Create opportunities for continued learning so that the skills attained in the school are consistent with what you are doing in the home and then generalized into other environments. Promote self-determination in the home. Encourage your child to attend IEP meetings and to lead those meetings! Bring people who have special knowledge or expertise about your child to the IEP meeting.
- b. High School Personnel (and Middle School Personnel) – Start the process early. Work together from the beginning and communicate with each other about the student's postschool vision and develop an appropriate course of study. Have the students and families actively involved in IEPs. Incorporate self-determination into your general curriculum. Model self-advocacy for students. Become student-focused and student-driven, thinking about the end in mind...where does the student want to be when he/she graduates and determine the supports and services which the student needs to reach those articulated postschool outcomes.
- c. Students – Have high expectations for yourself—Vision what you want from life. Work and study hard! It will pay off! Participate actively in your IEP meetings. Take charge of them and lead the way! Communicate openly your preferences and interests for the future. State what you feel you need from your teachers, your family, your friends, which will help you reach your goals for beyond school. Put yourself in situations to learn new things about work, about recreational activities, about postsecondary options, about LIFE! Ask questions about the classes you are taking and the relevancy to what you want to do.

5. How would a family or student get services from the state education agency and local education agencies?

Parents can call the ADE/ESS office at (602) 364-4000 or 1-800-352-4558 for any questions they have regarding transition services, or any other question involving special education. Parent Information Network Specialists are also available to help parents understand issues surrounding special education and can be accessed by calling our office. They can also visit our website at www.ade.az.gov.

At the local level, a student would need to be referred for an evaluation and eligibility determined for special education services based upon federal and state requirements. If a parent feels that his/her child may have a disability, let the teacher know that you would like an evaluation conducted to determine if he/she is eligible for special education and related services.